DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 203 SO 022 769

AUTHOR Golemba, Beverly E.
TITLE Research on the History of Women.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 10p.; Paper prepared for presentation at a Colloquia Roundtable of the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society (Arlington, VA, April 3-5, 1992).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Biographies; Dictionaries; *Females; Historiography; Immigrants; *Research Problems; *Sex Bias; *Social Science Research; Womens Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Womens History

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the difficulties encountered during research on the accomplishments of lesser known women for inclusion in a biographical dictionary of such women. The dictionary includes biographical sketches of 761 women representing 50 countries and 35 fields of endeavor from 1600 to the present. The paper focuses on the difficulties of finding women who had made accomplishments during certain periods, the unevenness of the recording of women's history, the overall lack of information, and that many women's accomplishments were credited to or plagiarized by their husbands, fathers, and brothers. The work of 300 additional women had to be abandoned because of the lack of sufficient information about them. The purpose of this research was to correct the misconceptions that women accomplished nothing, that some were exceptions, and that women's history is different. Because the theme of the meeting for which this paper was prepared concerned immigrants, the biographies of five immigrant women are featured as examples of the contributions made by women. (Author/DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED353203

Colloquia Roundtable of the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociolgical Society April 3-5 1992

"RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY OF WOMEN"

submitted by

Beverly E. Golemba
Saint Leo College
Box 629 Langley AFB, VA 23665
Office: (804) 766-1812
Home: (804) 380-1091

(two copies enclosed)

PLEASE NOTE: Because my flight was cancelled, I was unable to preside at the Roundtable or present my paper.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

BEVERLY E. GOLEMBA

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

SO 021 769

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

This paper was a presentation of the difficulties encountered in during research on the accomplishments of lesser known women for my book Lesser Known Women: A Biographical Dictionary. The book includes the biographies of 761 women representing 50 countries and 35 fields of endeavor from 1600 to the present.

The paper focuses on the difficulties finding women who had made accomplishments during certain periods, the uneveness of the recording of women's history, the paucity or lack of information, and that many women's accomplishments were credited to or plagiarized by their husbands, fathers, and brothers. The work of 300 additional women had to be abandoned because of the lack of sufficient information about them. The purpose of the paper is to correct the misconceptions that women accomplished nothing, that some were exceptions, and that women's history is different.

Because the theme of the annual meeting was immigrants, and to highlight the accomplishments of women, the biographies of five immigrant women were selected for presentation as examples of the contributions made by women.

COLLOQUIA PRESENTATION

I was not fully aware of the difficulty in doing research about women until I started the research for my book. The three developmental components of male superiority, female subjugation, and collusion between the sexes created the social reality that has dominated the world for centuries; male accomplishments were more notable and valued, hence, recorded, women accepted their devaluation, and both sexes saw no reason to question this hierarchical order.

By using a chronological sequence, I was able to show that women have consistently made outstanding contributions over the centuries and continue to do so. A difficulty encountered in using a choronological order was that there were some years for which no representative woman was found, and for other years there were more women than could be included. For example, there were periods when a woman was one of many seeking women's rights, while in other countries at other times a woman was the lone voice speaking out.

The search and selection process in gathering data provided some interesting information about women. The difficulties encountered reflect the unevenness of recording women's accomplishments. It was not unusual to find that a woman was only recorded as the wife, mother, daughter or sister of a man (such as in the case of Sophie Brahe where the information about her work was only found by reading about her brother, Tycho) or that her work has been credited to her husband, father or brother (as found with Fanny

Hensel whose work could only be published by her brother Felix Mendholson). It was also found that women's names were often very literally translated from another language into English with several different spellings of the same name, which is not usual with male identities. In several instances, I found that the two women I thought I was researching were, in fact, one woman recorded under either her maiden or married name. The work of women was often deprecated. A common phrase often repeated was "her work did not outlive her" or voluminous work was evaluated as trite because the woman had been so productive.

Most of the data came from published literature; however, it was not uncommon to have to pursue information through literature no longer in publication or only available through copies of documents or gleaned from documents. Historical societies and governmental agencies were frequently the only sources for information. On one occassion, it was the great-granddaughter of a Native-American chief who provided the information being sought. This great-granddaughter also provided the name of the tribe's recognized historian, Paul Brill, who was invaluable in providing me with documented information. Interested individuals were sometimes the only people to possess particular data.

The research on the work of 300 women had to be abandoned because of the limited information about them, or because their work had only been recorded in one country (and not necessarily their own

country as was the case for Marie Durocher, the first female physician in Brazil) and that this limited information was not always available.

The women researched seemed to fall into one of two categories: those who were assertive and self-assured enough to defy tradition and those too modest to fully explore their potential. There were women who defied custom and sometimes even family in order to realize their ambition and those who failed in spite of their effort and willingness to try, whereas others bent to tradition. Some published anonymously (or were forced to) or their work was exploited or plagiarized by fathers or husbands.

By adding the contributions of women over several centuries while noting what male contributions were recognized during these periods, we can correct the misconceptions that women accomplished nothing, that there were some excusable exceptions, and that the history of women is different. We can identify with these women in our own personal way-- they can serve as a beacon to guide and encourage us toward our goals or they can serve as a warning sign of the circumstances and attitudes limiting us.

Since the theme of this annual meeting is immigrant groups, I have selected one immigrant woman from each century since the seventeenth century and two from the twentieth century to demonstrate that the accomplishments of women have largely been ignored.

1635	Elizabeth Pole	immigrated from England
1739	Eliza Lucas	immigrated from England
1883	Emma Lazarus	immigrated from Russia
1943	Myra Logan	Afro-American
1947	Gerty Cori	immigrated from Czechoslovakia

1635 ELIZABETH POLE (1589-1654)

Three hundred and fifty years later the citizens of Taunton, Massachusetts are still debating whether or not this woman founded their city. Much of the controversy stems from the paucity, inaccuracy, and interpretation of records. What is uncontested is that she arrived in the colonies in 1635, owned two farms called Littleworth and Shute, was one of the two founders of the still existing First Parish Church, and one of the founders of the iron works. The women of this city had her body reinterred in a new cemetery in 1836 with a monument that had been erected in 1771 proclaiming her the founder of Taunton. Part of the city seal reads "Dux femina facti" (a woman is the leader of the enterprise).

1739 ELIZA LUCAS aka PINCKNEY (1722-1793)

Lucas was born in Antigua where her father was a Colonel and educated in England where she learned foreign languages as well as music. In 1738 the family moved to South Carolina where they owned three plantations. The outbreak of war in 1739 found her

father back at his post in Antigua while Lucas and her mother and younger sister remained in South Carolina. Because of her mother's poor health, at age eighteen she was put in charge of running the plantations. As well as growing cotton, ginger, and other crops, she successfully grew indigo from seeds sent from Antigua by her father. She was also successful in developing indigo dye which proved to be highly profitable. In 1744 she married Charles Pinckney and bore four children. It was during these years that she also successfully started a silkworm farm. Her husband died in 1758, and she continued to run their vast holdings. Later, two of her sons who were signers of the Declaration of Independence, were granted federal appointments by George Washington.

1883 EMMA LAZARUS (1849-1887)

Ralph Waldo Emerson praised the first book of poetry published by Lazarus, and she dedicated her next book to him; however, by and large, her poetry was not well received. In 1881 she began to write about the immigrant populations arriving in the United States, especially Jews and the persecution and discrimination they experienced; her books with this new theme were far more successful than her poetry had been. In 1883 her sonnet entitled The New Colossus was selected for one of the inscriptions to be placed on the Statue of Liberty. Among the lines in this sonnet are "Give me your tired, your poor" and 'Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

1943 MYRA LOGAN (1908-1977)

Logan accomplished three firsts: she was the first African American to win a scholarship to the New York Medical School; the first woman to perform heart surgery; and the first African American elected a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons. Logan graduated from Atlanta University in 1927 and earned her master's degree. The recipient of a second scholarship, she graduated from New York Medical College in 1933. Logan developed her specialty in heart surgery, especially pediatric heart surgery and also did research on the effects of the then new antibiotics on children. Married to the noted artist, Charles Alston, Logan retired from practice in 1970 and accepted a position with the Physical Disability Program of the New York State Workmen's Compensation Board, a position she held until shortly before her death.

1974 GERTY CORI (1896-1957)

Cori was the female member of the Gerty and Carl Cori husband-wife research team. Both had been born in Czechoslovakia, graduated from medical school together in 1920, emigrated to the United States in 1922, and were professors at Washington University Medical School in St. Louis. Their research is most renowned for two discoveries: first, that carbohydrates are stored in the liver and muscles and are changed into glucose

that can be used by the body, and secondly, that certain hormones affect the metabolism of carbohydrates. The Coris shared the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine in 1947 with Bernardo Houssay; Gerty Cari was the first woman physician to win a Nobel Prize.